Ken Blanchard, author of many leadership bestsellers, said that a river without banks is a pond. Likewise, a team without relationship norms leaves itself open to potential interpersonal problems. Members of every team develop ways of interacting with each other over time. **Effective interpersonal communication among members and successful communication are critical components of a team functioning effectively**. How a team makes decisions, assigns work, and holds members accountable determines team success.

**Team norms are a set of rules or guidelines that a team establishes together to shape the interaction of members with one another**. Team norms are used to **guide** behaviour, **assess** how well team members are interacting, and **enable** members to communicate any behaviours that are negatively impacting the success of the team.

***Creating Group Norms***:

1. Brainstorm a list of guidelines that will help create an effective team.
   * the more ideas generated the better
   * Do not comment on nor critique the ideas.
   * record them on a flip chart or white board where the whole group can see them
2. Determine the group norms you wish to keep and support **as a group**
   * No recommended number of group norms
   * New group norms can be added over time as needed
   * Keep in mind that "all" group behavior cannot, and should not, be legislated, but the most important interaction areas do need attention.
3. Each member of the group signs & commits to “living” the guidelines. They also commit to telling each other if they believe a group member is violating an agreed upon group norm.
4. Post the group norms in the team’s meeting room and email them to Margo Nygard

Cultural leaders shape the orientations, quality, cohesiveness, and energy of their organization’s culture – those often unspoken values, beliefs, norms, symbols, actions, and pressures that exist beyond an organization’s policies and rules that powerfully influence how its members:

* + - * Relate to each other,
      * Do their business,
      * Value and reward each other’s productivity and contributions, and
      * Participate in the organization’s social, recreational, and work life.

(Schwahn and Spady, 2002, p.68)

***Sample Team Norms***

* Treat each other with **dignity** and **respect**.
* **Transparency**: avoid hidden agendas.
* Be **genuine** with each other about ideas, challenges, and feelings.
* **Trust** each other. Have confidence that issues discussed will be kept in confidence.
* Team members will practice a consistent **commitment** to sharing all the information they have. Share the complete information that you have up front.
* **Listen** first to understand, and don’t be dismissive of the input received when we listen.
* Practice being **open-minded**.
* Rather than searching for the guilty, give your colleagues the benefit of the doubt; have a **clean slate** process.
* **Support** each other - don't throw each other under the bus.
* Be **open**, **communicative**, and **authentic** with each other and their teams.
* **Ask** for help
* Problems are presented in a way that promotes **mutual discussion** and resolution.
* It is safe to be wrong. **Thoughtful** decision making is expected.
* **Own** the whole implementation of AISI, not just your little piece; recognize that you are part of something larger than yourself. Be responsible to own the whole picture.
* Practice and **experience** humility - each of us may not have all the answers.
* If you commit to doing something – do it. Be **accountable** and **responsible** to the team.
* Promise to come **prepared** to your meetings and projects so that you **demonstrate** value and respect for the time and convenience of others.
* Strive to continuously **improve** and achieve the team's strategic goals.
* **Expend** the effort to practice all of these norms and to care enough about the team and its work to confront each other, with **care**, **compassion**, and **purpose**, when a team member fails to practice these norms.